

Transactions

OCTOBER 2001

TRANSPORTATION NEWS
FOR THE NINE-COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO
BAY AREA



Crisis Knows No Boundaries

The September 11 terrorist attack on New York and Washington, D.C., that shocked the nation and the world hit MTC with a special force. Our counterpart agency in New York, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, or NYMTC, had its offices on the 82nd floor of One World Trade Center, perilously close to the 90th-floor crash-impact location. Fortunately, even miraculously, most NYMTC staffers survived the attack, with some sustaining minor injuries. But three employees did not make it out of the doomed structure. To our sister agency and the victims' survivors — and to the thousands of other affected families — MTC extends its deepest sympathy.

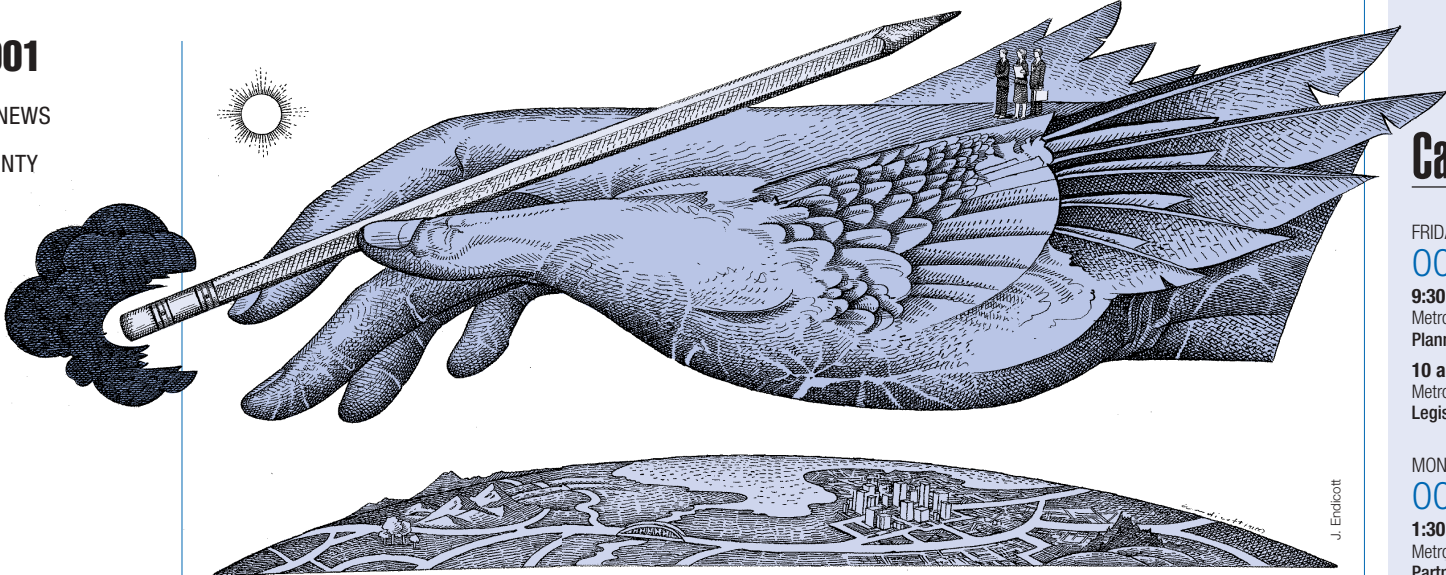
This frightful disaster literally came out of the blue and shook a great city to its very core. Not only was there no warning, there was not even an awareness of the potential danger. And yet it serves to remind us that we in the Bay Area live with a very real and well-known threat — not from the skies but from deep inside the earth. This is earthquake country, and we must be prepared for the "Big One," which seismologists tell us is not only possible but highly likely to strike within the next 30 years.

MTC takes earthquake preparedness seriously — never more so than in the month of October, when 12 years ago the Loma Prieta quake struck the region, destroying the Cypress Freeway in Oakland and severing a section of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. This month we are again conducting our annual earthquake response training for MTC staff, so the agency can ably play the role of regional transportation information clearinghouse in the event of a large earthquake or other major emergency, natural or otherwise. Caltrans, Bay Area transit operators and other transportation partners also participate in this training.

Together, we are honing our ability to cope with an event that we can neither predict nor take steps to avoid. The unthinkable catastrophe that befell New York and our colleagues at the NYMTC sharpens our appreciation for just how important this task is.

Steve Heminger

Executive Director, MTC



New Ozone Plan Will Help Clear the Air

Go ahead, take a deep breath — air quality is improving. And the *Revised Bay Area 2001 Ozone Attainment Plan* released last month by MTC, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) promises to make it even better. The question is whether it will be good enough. The stakes are huge. Work on more than 100 highway and transit projects worth over \$1 billion could grind to a halt in January if the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not approve the region's *2001 Ozone Attainment Plan*. MTC, the Air District and ABAG revised the plan after the EPA recommended changes to an earlier version. ♦ Although the region's air has been getting steadily cleaner, ozone readings have exceeded the federal standard on a few hot summer and fall afternoons, particularly in the Livermore Valley and other inland locations. The revised plan proposes to remedy the situation by reducing emissions of volatile organic compounds by 121 tons per day by 2006, and nitrogen oxides by 124 tons a day. The two substances react to form ozone. ♦ Stringent controls on engines and fuels enacted by the California Air Resources Board will go a long way toward reaching those targets. To take the region the rest of the distance, the revised plan includes stronger controls on stationary sources such as oil refineries plus five new transportation control measures. These include a \$40 million investment in regional express buses; \$15 million to expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities; \$27 million for programs that promote transit- and pedestrian-oriented development; enhanced transit access to Bay Area airports; and expansion of the Freeway Service Patrol tow-truck service. ♦ "We're just as committed to protecting the environment as we are to improving mobility," noted MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger. "This plan shows we can do both." ♦ Critics of the original plan charged that the public had insufficient opportunity to contribute. So MTC, ABAG and the Air District held six community meetings to solicit input on the revised plan. The public will get another chance to weigh in on October 24 (see calendar at right).

Eleventh Hour Deal Delivers Bridge Retrofit Financing

During the flurry of deal-making that marked the final days of the Legislature's 2001 session, state lawmakers finally reached agreement last month on a plan to cover cost overruns on the seismic retrofitting of Bay Area toll bridges and replacement of the east span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The governor's signature on Assembly Bill 1171 (sponsored by

Fremont Assemblyman John Dutra) would put Bay Area drivers on the hook for about two-thirds of the estimated \$2 billion in cost overruns for the retrofit program. The local funding would come from an extension of the current \$1 toll surcharge, which was originally scheduled to expire in 2008 and which brings tolls on state-owned bridges to \$2. A portion of the second dollar could be available for congestion-related improvements

in the bridge corridors.

The state government would cover the remainder of the shortfall plus up to \$448 million in any future overruns. Under the bill, Caltrans would use revenue from the toll surcharge to back a series of bond issues.

MTC oversees the region's toll bridges in its role as the Bay Area Toll Authority, and was a key player in the negotiations that led to the funding package.



The deal clears the way for construction of the Bay Bridge's new east span, shown here in a rendering.

Calendar

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 12, 2001

9:30 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Planning and Operations Committee*

10 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Legislation Committee*

MONDAY
OCTOBER 15, 2001

1:30 pm
MetroCenter, 3rd Floor Conference Room
Partnership Finance Committee

TUESDAY
OCTOBER 16, 2001

3:30 pm
MetroCenter, 3rd Floor Conference Room
Minority Citizens Advisory Committee

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 18, 2001

1:30 pm
MetroCenter, 3rd Floor Conference Room
Partnership Legislative Committee

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 24, 2001

9 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Bay Area Toll Authority*

9:05 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Metropolitan Transportation Commission*

9:30 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Public Hearing on the Revised Bay Area 2001 Ozone Attainment Plan*

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 25, 2001

9:30 am
MetroCenter, 3rd Floor Conference Room
Partnership Planning and Operations Committee

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 26, 2001

9:30 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Regional Airport Planning Committee

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 31, 2001

1:30 pm
MetroCenter, 3rd Floor Conference Room
Partnership Transit Coordination Committee

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 7, 2001

6:30 pm
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Chambers — 580 Texas Street, Fairfield
Public Hearing on Unmet Transit Needs

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 9, 2001

9:30 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Planning and Operations Committee*

10 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways Operations Committee*

10:15 am
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Legislation Committee*

*Webcast on <www.mtc.ca.gov>

Agendas More User-Friendly

Agendas for all MTC meetings are posted on MTC's Web site approximately one week in advance of the meeting (go to <www.mtc.ca.gov/whats_happening/whindex.htm>). In an effort to improve public outreach, MTC recently retooled its agendas to describe items in fuller detail, and in plain English. Let us know what you think by e-mailing <info@mtc.ca.gov>, or calling 510.464.7787.

Local Caltrans Chief Retires



Caltrans

Harry Yahata, director of Caltrans' Bay Area office for the past four years, has hung up his hard hat. The soft-spoken engineer's retirement ends a 40-year career with Caltrans, as well as a four-year stint as the representative of the State Business, Transportation and Housing Agency on MTC.

Yahata was responsible for managing 1,500 miles of state highway and overseeing 4,000 employees. One highlight of his tenure was the installation of the FasTrak™ electronic toll collection system on the region's state-owned toll bridges.

Acting Caltrans District 4 Director Randell H. Iwasaki will replace Yahata on MTC.

Commission Actions

September 2001

- Allocated \$49 million in transit funds to SamTrans for fiscal 2001–02— helping to boost SamTrans' fixed-route bus operating budget by 18 percent to, among other things, improve its on-time performance and begin the district's first 24-hour bus service on a countywide route.
- Allocated \$88 million in operating subsidies to San Francisco Muni for fiscal 2001–02. This assistance, combined with city parking revenues and city general fund money, will help stave off the need to raise fares.
- Released the *Performance Measures Report* and the *Environmental Justice Report* for the *Draft 2001 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, which look at the degree to which proposed RTP projects would increase mobility, sustain the region's economy, enhance community vitality, improve access for minority and low-income citizens, and impact the local and global environment.

Project Update

New Bridges Rising From the Bay

Four hundred is the magic number (more or less) for San Mateo-Hayward Bridge commuters counting the days until the widening of the low-rise section is complete. Construction of the 5.1-mile trestle is at the halfway mark, and the entire section is slated to open in December 2002. When the roughly \$204 million project is complete, the bridge will have three lanes in each direction, shore to shore.

Widening of the San Mateo Bridge is one of several projects being funded through Regional Measure 1 (RM 1), approved by Bay Area voters in 1988. MTC oversees the RM 1 program in its role as the Bay Area Toll Authority. Also under way is the construction of an all-new, four-lane bridge to replace the 74-year-old span that carries westbound Interstate 80 over the Carquinez Strait from Vallejo to Crockett. MTC and Caltrans opted to replace the existing span with a twin-tower suspension bridge after determining that the structure could not be retrofitted to meet seismic standards.

The north tower structure already looms more than 120 feet above the water — which is close to the deck level of the new span — and can now be glimpsed by motorists crossing the original span. The south tower is just now starting to rise above water level. Caltrans still expects to meet its late-2003 completion target.

Meanwhile, bids for the main span of a second Benicia-Martinez Bridge were opened in late September. Caltrans expects to complete the five-lane span (to carry northbound Interstate 680 traffic) by the fall of 2004.



San Mateo-Hayward Bridge widening progresses



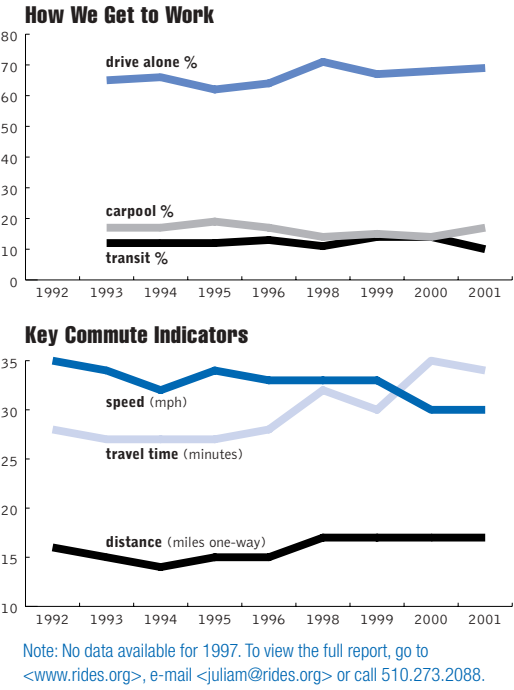
Tower for the new Carquinez Bridge takes shape



Rendering of the new Benicia-Martinez Bridge (on right)

Facts & Figures

Commuting Trends: Carpooling and Solo Driving Up, Transit Market Share Down



We just don't seem to give up. Driving alone to work that is. The newly released *Commute Profile 2001* prepared by RIDES for Bay Area Commuters as part of MTC's regional rideshare program shows that despite increased congestion, the single-passenger auto continues to be by far the most popular way for Bay Area commuters to get to work.

Based on data collected this past spring, the *Commute Profile* indicates that 17 percent of Bay Area commuters regularly participate in a formal or informal carpool or vanpool. This is the highest rate of carpooling in the region since 1996. But the growth reflects only a modest rise of three percentage points from last year and comes primarily at the expense of transit's share of the commute market. The percentage of drive-alone commuters actually rose to 69 percent this spring from 68 percent a year earlier.

Although the average commute distance has remained relatively stable over the years, average travel time to work has increased 21 percent since 1992, from 28 minutes to 34 minutes, while driving speeds are declining. The latter two trends — based on respondents' perception of their commute — reflect the increase in traffic congestion.

Car Sharing Program Moves Into Fast Lane

What's lime green, shiny and multiplying like crazy? If you answered City CarShare's fleet of Volkswagen New Beetles, you're right. The cars have been buzzing around San Francisco since this past March and the program has proven so popular that City CarShare will expand into Oakland next month and Berkeley in January 2002.

"It's going so well," said City CarShare Board Chairman Gabriel Metcalf, "that after six months, we already have over 800 people in the program in San Francisco alone. That's way beyond our one-year goal of having 500–600 members."

The idea behind car sharing is simple: to make cars available to people on a per-use basis. "The goal is to provide a better alternative than private auto ownership," Metcalf explained. Participants pay a \$10 monthly membership fee plus a \$2.50 hourly charge (capped at \$25 per 24-hour period) and 45 cents per mile.



City CarShare

City CarShare currently has some 30 cars at 11 locations in San Francisco — mostly lime green New Beetles — and is adding vehicles at a pace of about one a week. The \$130,000 contract with the city of Oakland will allow City CarShare to deploy 10 cars in the first year. The organization expects its \$55,000 contract with the city of Berkeley to finance the acquisition of five cars in the first year.

City CarShare is a nonprofit organization started by the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and Urban Ecology.

For more information, contact City CarShare at 415.995.8588 or, in the East Bay, at 510.352.0323, or visit the Web site: <www.citycarshare.org>.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION WWW.MTC.CA.GOV

Commissioners

- Sharon J. Brown, Chair
Cities of Contra Costa County
- Steve Kinsey, Vice Chair
Marin County and Cities
- Tom Ammiano
City and County of San Francisco
- Ralph J. Appezato
Cities of Alameda County
- Keith Axtell
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- James T. Beall Jr.
Santa Clara County
- Mark DeSaulnier
Contra Costa County
- Bill Dodd
Napa County and Cities
- Dorene M. Giacomini
U.S. Department of Transportation
- Scott Haggerty
Alameda County
- Randell H. Iwasaki
State Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
- Barbara Kaufman
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- Sue Lempert
Cities of San Mateo County
- John McLemore
Cities of Santa Clara County
- Michael D. Nevin
San Mateo County
- Jon Rubin
San Francisco Mayor's Appointee
- James P. Sperring
Solano County and Cities
- Pamela Torliatt
Association of Bay Area Governments
- Sharon Wright
Sonoma County and Cities

Transactions
OCTOBER 2001

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, California 94607

510.464.7700 TEL.
510.464.7769 TDD/TTY
510.464.7848 FAX
info@mtc.ca.gov E-MAIL
www.mtc.ca.gov WEB

Steve Heminger
Executive Director

Ann Flemer
Deputy Director, Operations

Therese W. McMillan
Deputy Director, Policy

Randy Rentschler
Manager, Legislation & Public Affairs

Brenda Kahn
Editor

Catalina Alvarado, Joe Curley, Réka Goode,
John Goodwin, David Weinreich (intern)
Staff Writers

Finger & Smith Design Associates
Art Direction

Peter Beeler, Michele Stone
Production

Paris Printing, Novato
Printing

©2001 MTC. All rights reserved.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORT
FIRST CLASS
U.S. Postage
PAID
Oakland, CA
Permit No. 854